

The Mullica Watershed Planning Project

A cooperative project of the Pinelands Commission
& the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection



To protect and manage the water resources of the Mullica River Basin, the Pinelands Commission, as a consultant to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, is working to develop a management plan for the Mullica Watershed. The goal of the plan is to protect water quality, water supply, and the natural resources of the Mullica Watershed.

Much of the Mullica Watershed is located in the Pinelands National Reserve, an internationally recognized region of ecological significance where people live and work in concert with efforts to protect natural resources.

Within the State-designated Pinelands Area, land use and environmental protection is guided by the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), which is administered by the Pinelands Commission. The CMP serves as a good starting point for the planning process, both in terms of its basic provisions and in the extensive data that has been gathered over the years to aid in implementation.

Because it has been protected under the CMP for two decades and remains lightly settled, the Mullica Watershed provides a fairly pristine source of water. Even in this idyllic setting, however, potential threats to the area's groundwater and many picturesque waterways still exist.

Point source pollutants are introduced into the watershed at specific locations, and are typically managed to reduce impacts. Significant point sources are not very common in the watershed and are primarily limited to municipal wastewater discharge and contaminated sites such as gas stations and landfills.

Nonpoint source pollution is a more common form of pollution in the watershed. Because nonpoint source pollution is diffuse in nature and may come from multiple sources that are difficult to identify, it is a more challenging form of pollution to control. Some examples of nonpoint source

pollution in the Mullica Watershed include nutrient-rich groundwater that feeds into streams and rivers, and runoff from roads, lawns and agricultural fields.

The development of a good management plan for the Mullica Watershed will involve gathering and analyzing data on water quality and supply throughout the watershed, developing education and outreach programs to raise awareness in local communities, reaching out to all stakeholders, and identifying potential solutions that can be implemented.

Where do you fit into all of this? Use this brochure to better understand The Mullica Watershed Planning Project and use your knowledge of the issues important to the watershed to help the Pinelands Commission develop a responsive and functional management plan. See the back page of this brochure for more details on getting involved.

Land,



Water,



& You!



Visit us at our website: <http://www.state.nj.us/pinelands/mullica>

What is a Watershed?

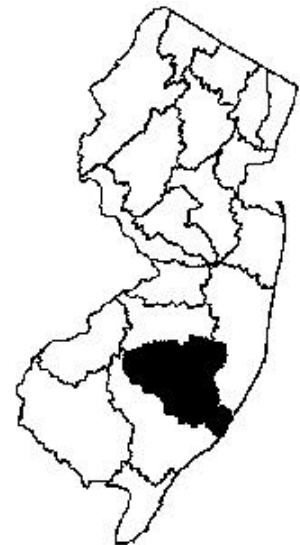
A watershed is the total land area that drains into a particular body of water. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has identified 20 major watersheds within the State. The shaded portion of the map to the right shows the Mullica River Watershed (Watershed Management Area #14). Activities conducted in this watershed have a direct effect on the quality and flow of the Mullica River and the overall health of the watershed. Because the Mullica River flows into the Great Bay, activities in the Watershed can also affect the Great Bay ecosystem.

Why Manage Watersheds?

Water does not recognize political boundaries. While municipalities are able to affect water quality somewhat through zoning and other requirements, communities cannot control what happens upstream and are disconnected from impacts downstream. The quality and availability of water that is underground can similarly be affected by activities that take place outside of municipal boundaries. While much of the Mullica Watershed falls within the Pinelands National Reserve and is therefore subject to the regional plan administered by the Pinelands Commission, existing and future development continue to affect water resources. Watersheds provide a natural unit for planning to protect the quality and quantity of ground and surface waters, because impacts are primarily experienced within their boundaries. The challenge lies in working across municipal boundaries to develop a plan that meets the needs of the entire watershed.

Mullica Facts

- The total area of the Mullica Watershed is 569 mi².
- There are roughly 87,000 people living within the watershed boundaries.
- Over 95% of the watershed falls within the Pinelands National Reserve, and over 80% is in the State-designated Pinelands Area.
- Burlington County makes up the largest land area in the watershed.
- Atlantic and Camden Counties have the highest population.



Management Across Political Boundaries

The following 24 municipalities are partially or entirely within the Mullica Watershed:

Barnegat Township
Bass River Township
Berlin Borough
Berlin Township
Brigantine City
Chesilhurst Borough
Egg Harbor City
Evesham Township
Galloway Township
Hamilton Township
Hammonton Town
Lacey Township
Little Egg Harbor Township
Medford Township
Mullica Township
Ocean Township
Port Republic City
Shamong Township
Stafford Township
Tabernacle Township
Washington Township
Waterford Township
Winslow Township
Woodland Township



What's in a Name?

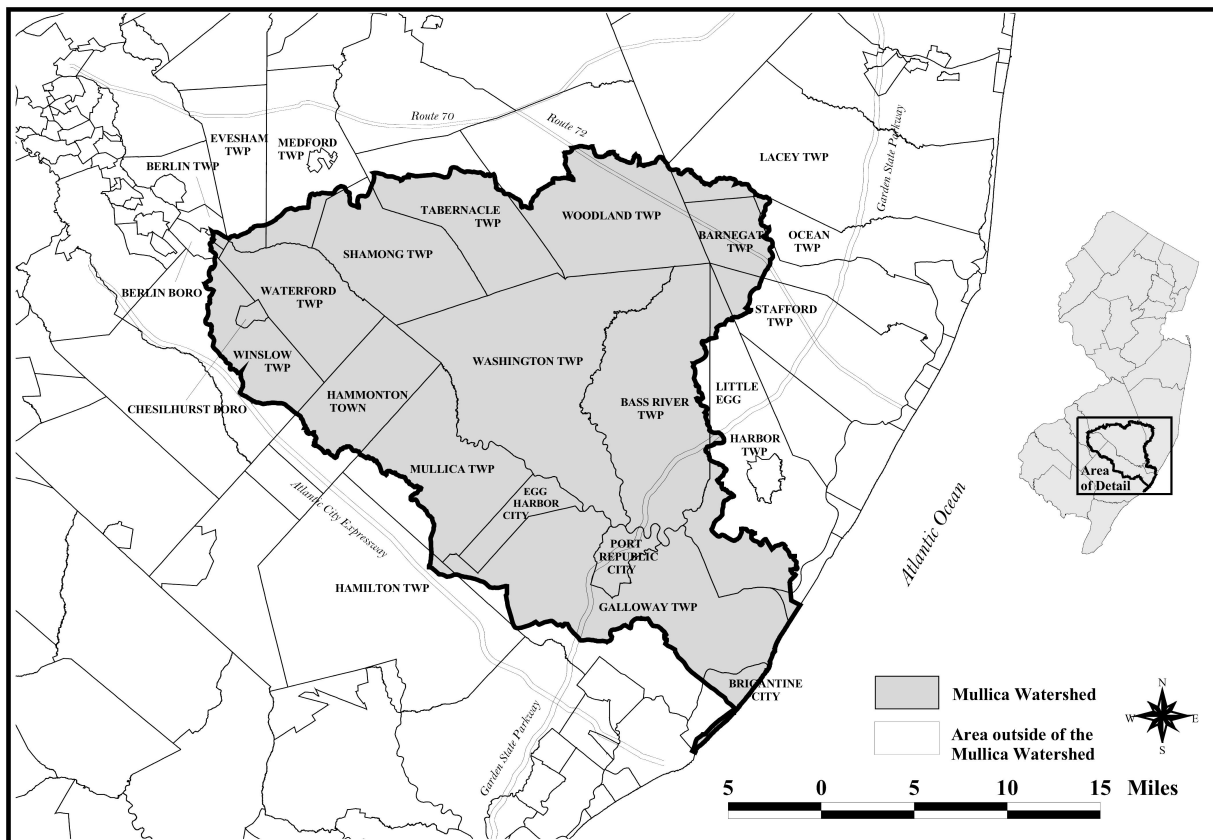
The Mullica River was named after Eric Mullica who settled in Lower Bank in 1645. Eric Mullica is reported to have owned a plantation in the vicinity of the Mullica River and lived to be 100 years old.

Who Depends on the Watershed?

The map below shows the boundaries of the Mullica Watershed and the municipalities located in the watershed. Some people may think that because they don't live near the Mullica River (or the Great Bay) that they must live in a different watershed. If you live in any area covered by the shaded map below, however, your residence is in the Mul-

lica Watershed. Some towns and villages on the outreaches of the watershed are up to 18 miles from the main stem of the Mullica River. When it comes to managing a watershed, the involvement of citizens living on the periphery of the watershed is just as important as that of individuals living on the banks of the Mullica River. In addition to residents,

others that depend on the watershed include those whose livelihood and recreational interests are based here. Examples include cranberry and blueberry farmers, commercial and recreational fisherman, campgrounds and canoe livery operators, and hikers, cyclists, boaters, hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts.



What Else Depends on the Watershed?

A variety of plants, animals, and other organisms live in the Mullica Watershed. Characteristic plant species include pitch pine, Atlantic white cedar, several species of oak tree, royal fern, turkey beard, and pitcher plants. Spring peepers, Fowler's toads, fence lizards, and black rat snakes are just a few examples of common amphibians and reptiles living in the watershed. Birds such as red-tailed hawks, turkey

vultures, pine warblers, and Carolina chickadees are frequently sited in the skies above the watershed, and, although not always seen because of their small size, over 700 species of insects call the Mullica Watershed home. Overall, roughly 93 threatened or endangered plant and animal species live in the Pine-lands National Reserve, many of which are found in the Mullica Watershed. Some exam-

ples of endangered animal and plant species found in the Mullica Watershed include timber rattlesnakes, pine snakes, pine barrens treefrogs, pine barren gentian, bog-asphodel, and curly grass fern. Wise management of the resources within the Mullica Watershed will help to maintain the biological integrity of this important ecosystem by providing an environment where these unique organisms can flourish.

- **Attend public meetings.**
- **Look for updates on the Commission's website and e-mail us your ideas.**
- **Get on the watershed mailing list so you can be kept informed of major developments.**
- **Contact Kim Beidler at 609-894-7300 to let us know your ideas.**
- **Become active in some of the many watershed community groups such as the Mullica Watershed Forum (call Matt Purdue at 609-784-1535), and the Americorps Watershed Ambassadors program, which conducts community river and biological assessments (contact Christine Giordano at 609-294-8044).**

Getting Involved

Management at the watershed level is best accomplished with input from residents, businesses, farmers and other stakeholders in the watershed. The Pinelands Commission encourages you to get involved in whatever capacity you feel comfortable. Over the next several years, there will be many opportunities to get involved. Public meetings will be held throughout the year to solicit input on the planning process from community members. The Pinelands Commission will also provide updates on watershed activities through newsletters, a website (www.state.nj.us/pinelands/mullica), and other forms of communication. Whichever way you choose to get involved, the important thing is that you participate in the protection of your watershed.



In addition to general public outreach, the Pinelands Commission has created a steering committee to involve key groups in the planning process such as farmers, public landowners, environmental organizations, water managers, and providers of/participants in outdoor recreation. Technical focus panels will also be created to investigate specific concerns within the watershed and offer recommendations on the best course of action to follow. Throughout the process, the Pinelands Commission will be soliciting ideas for Action Now projects, which are projects intended to specifically address the more immediate needs of the watershed.



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